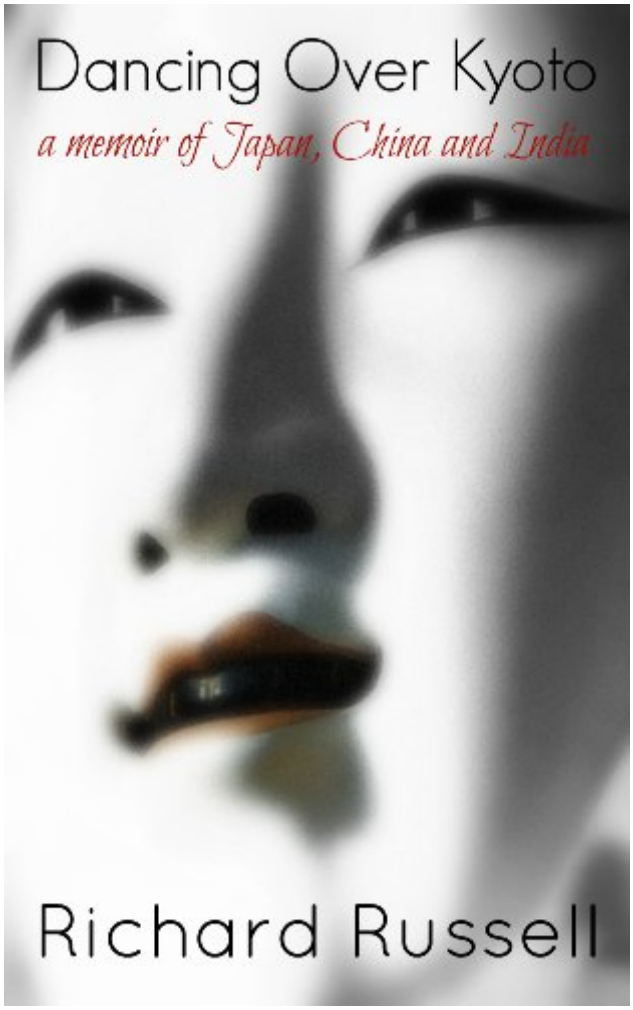
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Dancing Over Kyoto: A Memoir Of Japan, China And India



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Synopsis

A Memoir of Japan, China and India. Dancing Over Kyoto is one man’s love letter to Japan, and to many people whose lives have been intertwined with his 30 years of Japan experiences. It offers odes to strange, wondrous and at times discomforting experiences in India and China, too. A measure of Southern Gothic completes a recipe that will satisfy long after the final pages are read, pages in which a final, unexpected sorrow hits, but out of which hope abides. Dancing Over Kyoto is both intimate and funny, startling and contemplative. Personal experiences highlight universal truths about our flawed, but ultimately optimistic, selves. No matter where in the world we live or go.

Book Information

File Size: 768 KB

Print Length: 227 pages

Publication Date: December 23, 2013

Sold by:Ã Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00EUMA9NC

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,033,227 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #66 inÃ Â Books > Travel > Asia > Japan > Kyoto #304 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > Asia > Japan #512 inÃ Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Japanese

Customer Reviews

DANCING OVER KYOTO : A MEMOIR OF JAPAN, CHINA AND INDIA, Richard Russell’s enchanting, modern story of a life of travel in Asia is a tale that uniquely tells out that famous line from William Faulkner’s Requiem for a Nun, "The past is never dead. It’s not even past." Our past lives on in us, through us, in all we encounter. Russell tells his story via a collection of vignettes into his early adulthood through middle-aged years, while an exchange student in Japan, and while living, working and traveling abroad. It is a collection that is bound together with the memoirist’s neat and composed stitches of retrospection and introspection. Remember, you can’t really tell the tale

you are living so well until you've lived it and begun to understand it via memory. Exploration of the examined life is one of the great strengths of this work. Though many parts of his story are wistful, Russell shows great skill with humor, especially a graceful, understated irony that offers readers many layers of appreciation. And of course, as other reviewers have stated, his descriptions evoke a place and time so well, you can see it in your mind's eye. Kyoto, gets the royal, or should I say, imperial, treatment. You can tell this author loves travel and physical culture.Imagine, if you will, a young American boy, living a traditional post-nuclear age American childhood complete with the requisite stresses, joys and monotonies. And into that boy's heart a seed is planted, special seed that will grow into a strong, embodied, living excitement about and respect for cultures other than his own. The respect will branch out into a zeal for travel and an impulse for modes of exploration that travel guides and maps both foster and inhibit. Of course the flowering of the youth's romantic love will be mirrored by living blossoms of reverence for a special place, memories of the special connections made with people so far away, yet still so dear, and the merriments of a time, all intermingled with the lifeless petals of reflected sufferings and heartaches, of youth lost, and experience gained, and everywhere, the seemingly uniform green leaves of daily life.DANCING OVER KYOTO is a meander through the garden of a man's life. Each step along (and off) the path is a journey in its own right. Each story opens a time capsule through which the author examines his own life, not as a historian, but as a researcher of heart and soul and memory, each artifactual element casting light on the path ahead. The details become, well, more than the details, and they matter so much, because life and love matter so much, always. Richard Russell is a confident memoirist who describes a face or a voice, a place or a moment with such certainty and polish that you know he must cherish his memories greatly. It is his great gift to have offered them to the rest of us to read and appreciate in turn. This act of generosity evokes what Colette said, when she presented a prized Baccarat crystal paperweight to visiting wunderkind novelist Truman Capote who had admired it on her bedside table, and yet protested her giving it to him: "My dear, really there is no point in giving a gift unless one also treasures it oneself."I highly recommend DANCING OVER KYOTO for readers of memoir, travel enthusiasts, lovers of Asia, and anyone who enjoys sojourning in the soulful stories of another life.

Russell draws us into homey small town Japan through his exploration of life, work and love as a young Alabaman exchange student. His lack of pretense and emotional honesty makes the book believable and engaging. His gifts for storytelling and imagery flow. Russell excels at concrete, sensual details of simple pleasures: festive meals, a bath at turns invigorating and debilitating, a

playful erotic interlude while swimming.The bookÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s most touching moment comes from a young Japanese womanÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s regret at a missed connection. The object she will remember the author by--its texture, taste, soundÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •so common to us, yet distinctively American to her.The richness and unfolding of the Japan section contrast with vivid snapshots caught during business trips in Beijing and Mumbai. Different colors, smells and tempos intrude like the corresponding shift in the authorÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s personal life. We want to go back to Japan, to its quiet and grace.

"Dancing Over Kyoto" is ostensibly a memoir and travelogue, but it's far more than the sum of its parts: engaging and moving, with moments of laugh-out-loud humor. What most sets the writing apart, especially in today's literary/pop culture of style over substance, is its total lack of artifice. The tone is of a casual conversation with the reader, but the narrative lingers in the mind and heart long after one has finished it.

I love Kyoto and enjoy other people's stories. He has a few insights and some lovely experiences being welcomed into a host family.This book grew increasingly annoying as we hear about his futile romantic failures and self aggrandizing adventures.I don't think I would like this person. The editing is quite awful. He lists maybe twenty people who helped edit this mess. It didn't work.He shifts forward and backward in time illogically without reason. There are tons of typos in the text. Very poorly done. A lost soul.

Mr Russell's book was a real page-turner. I enjoyed reading about his life as an exchange student in Japan, as a teacher in the JET Program, and as an entrepreneur in the import/export business. He also wrote about his intimate relationships and the trials and tribulations that he went through (e.g. his long-distance relationships and his failed marriage). All these were woven together perfectly in this book and gave me an idea of what was happening in Mr Russell's life. In fact, as I was reading this book, I thought to myself that it could one day be made into a movie because I think many people, including those who have never been to Asia before, would be able to relate to his experiences.I'm giving this book 5 stars because it got me hooked; I couldn't stop reading. Highly recommended!

This book will deliver you to the middle of Japan and will allow you to experience front and center a lifetime of adventures there lived by one "daring American boy."I found the writing inviting, colorful

and very entretaining. The stories are personal, honest and paint a true picture of the wonders and challenges an expat experiences when immersing him or herself in the beauty of another culture.Perfect book for a rainy afternoon in front of the fireplace or a beach chair with a cold frozen drink by the side.

Richard Russell presents himself as a modern Everyman in this engaging book. Part coming of age memoir and part travelogue it is a feast of words that tells the tale of his sometime humorous and sometime poignant self-reflective journey in a land so very different from his southern USA upbringing. And yet he finds that although the locale may be different, people are very much the same everywhere experiencing the same emotions of love and loss that we all live through.

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